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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 HA-05 MCT-01 IO-13 PC-01
/077 W

O 131658Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5706

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 3701

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: HARGUINDEGUY'S SPEECH TO THE POLICE GATHERS WEIGHT

REF: BUENOS AIRES 3423

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/TPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (☒) In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

1. ON MAY 3 INTERIOR MINISTER HARGUINDEGUY TOLD THE ASSEMBLED CHIEFS OF POLICE IN HIS CUSTOMARY BLUNT AND UNEQUIVOCAL FASHION THAT THEY HAD BETTER ASSURE THAT THEIR TROOPS STOPPED USING TERRORIST TACTICS AND RESUME THEIR TRADITIONAL ROLE (REFTEL). THIS KIND OF TALK TO THIS PARTICULAR AUDIENCE HAS AWAKENED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS SUGGEST IT MAY HAVE BEEN A SERIOUS SIGNAL THAT THERE IS GENUINE COMMITMENT WITHIN THE GOA TO CLEANING UP THE COUNTER-TERRORIST OPERATIONS.

2. IN ITS LEAD EDITORIAL OF MAY 6, LA NACION STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE MINISTER'S WORDS AND HIS OBJECTIVES. THIS PAPER AS OFTEN AS NOT CARRIES MESSAGES FOR THE PALACE. ON MAY 5 JAMES GOODSSELL OF THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR ASKED THE MINISTER IN AN INTERVIEW IF THE SAME ORDERS THE POLICE RECEIVED HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THE MILITARY, WHO CARRY OUT MUCH OF THE COUNTER-SUBVERSIVE OPERATION. THE MINISTER REPLIED THAT SIMILAR ORDERS, THOUGH NOT IN IDENTICAL WORDS, HAD INDEED

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BEEN SENT OUT TO THE MILITARY COMMANDS. WHEN GOODSSELL CHALLENGED HIM WITH INCIDENTS SUCH AS THE NUNS AND THE SAN JUSTO ABDUCTIONS, HARGUINDEGUY EXPRESSED REGRET FOR INCIDENTS WHICH HAD OCCURRED IN THE PROCESS OF CLEANING UP SUBVERSION - WHICH WAS A WAR - BUT HE ADDED THAT "WE DON'T EXPECT REOCCURRENCES IN THE FUTURE." ASKED IF THE "WE" HE REFERRED TO WAS THE JUNTA, THE MINISTER SAID "WE" MEANT PRESIDENT VIDELA AND HIMSELF.

3. THE ACTING NUNCIO SOUGHT OUT AN AMBASSY OFFICER THIS WEEK AND RAISED THE SPEECH, SAYING THAT IT STRUCK HIM AS AN EVENT OF POTENTIAL MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE. PRESIDENT VIDELA'S COMMITMENT TO THIS LINE HAS NOW BEEN CONFIRMED BY TWO SOURCES, AMBASSADOR TO THE US AJA ESPIL WHO SAW HIM ON MAY 8, AND GENERAL VIOLA WHO TOLD THE AMBASSADOR ON MAY 12 THAT HARGUINDEGUY HAD SET FORTH THE PROGRAM THAT VIDELA WANTED CARRIED OUT.

4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SPEECH MUST BE SEEN IN THE LIGHT OF MINISTER HARGUINDEGUY'S CUSTOMARY ROLE AS A SPOKESMAN FOR THE HARD LINE, OF THE HITHERTO SACRED DOCTRINE THAT ANYTHING WAS JUSTIFIED IN THE NAME OF ELIMINATING SUBVERSION, AND THAT TACTICS OF COUNTER-TERRORIST OPERATIONS WERE NOT A SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION. THIS IS CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS IN WORD; WE SHALL BE WATCHING FOR ACCOMPANYING PROGRESS IN DEED.
CASTRO

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